

and he agreed to do so; and the committee which had previously been working, or rather feeling the way for Mr. Wilson, was re-formed into a Committee to secure the return of Captain Read. We told Captain Read we would put him in, and he had nothing more to do with the committee. We arranged everything ourselves.

368. Do you know how Major Pitt was appointed to go to Tauranga?—I made the arrangement with Pitt, and I paid for the steamer to take him there out of my own pocket.

369. Did you charter the steamer?—No; I made an arrangement with the captain of the steamer to land Major Pitt either on the East Cape, Opotiki, or Tauranga.

370. Where was the steamer going?—She was going to Auckland.

371. Does she usually call in at Tauranga, or any of the places you have mentioned?—Not usually.

372. But it is usual, upon an arrangement being made?—Yes, upon an arrangement being made, the steamers will land passengers on any practicable part of the coast.

373. That is on a certain sum being paid?—Yes.

374. What was the sum you paid?—£30.

375. Was that the usual sum to pay for a passage to Tauranga?—No. On this occasion the vessel had cattle on board, having been chartered by Mr. Kelly, and I had to arrange both with Kelly and also with the captain. To Kelly I gave £15, and the captain got £15 also.

376. Had Captain Read anything to do with the transaction?—He knew nothing about it for two or three days after it took place. When he came down I told him what had been done, and he said I had taken too much upon myself, as there was no necessity for sending Pitt. I said, "It was necessary," and he replied, "It was not, as he already had an agent looking after his interest there." He inquired what the expense was, and I told him if he came to the committee-room I would tell him. He also said there would be jealousy arising between the two agents, and that his interest would suffer, and that there would be a complete "mess" made of the thing.

377. Then Captain Read had nothing to do with the transaction?—Nothing whatever.

378. Was this committee a committee appointed by Captain Read, or a committee formed voluntarily?—It was a voluntary committee, formed to work for the interests of the district. Captain Read never even came to the committee, except when it was Wilson's committee, and he agreed to stand. It was the committee that induced him to stand.

379. Did you know, when you sent Pitt, that Captain Read had an agent at Tauranga?—Yes, I knew that.

380. But you never consulted Captain Read, either before you sent Pitt or after, until you told him Pitt had gone?—No; because I knew he would not let Pitt go if I told him I was going to send him.

381. Why would he not let Pitt go?—Because he had got Henshaw as his agent, and I knew he would not agree for two people to go up. It was mentioned in the committee, and some one suggested that he should be consulted; but it was decided not to tell him anything about it, for fear he would not agree. We did not like the idea of Henshaw acting as agent, because we thought he was not good enough; and as we heard Major Pitt was a good man, we decided to send him, as we were anxious to secure the return of Captain Read.

382. I want to know this, Mr. Cooper—I hope you will not take it as an impertinent question—but were you ever privy to any intended attempt at bribery on the part of Major Pitt?—Not in the least. We told him to do all he could to secure the return of Captain Read, but never supposed he would attempt to bribe any one.

383. You never authorized him to bribe any one?—No.

384. *Mr. Shaw.*] You say you yourself made the arrangement with Major Pitt to go to Tauranga?—Yes.

385. And it cost you £30 altogether?—£30.

386. That was after Captain Read had been before the committee, and had consented to stand?—After he had been before Wilson's committee.

387. Did you give him any money at that time?—Yes, £30.

388. No more?—No.

389. That was when he first started?—Yes.

390. Did he get any more from any other member of the committee?—I do not know.

391. Was anybody acting as treasurer, who had special charge of the moneys?—There was no money.

392. He may have got moneys from other members of the committee?—Yes, he may have certainly, but—

393. He may have got £500?—Yes, he may have; but as I had to go round town to get together what I gave him, I should have heard if he had received money from any one else.

394. Do you mean to say that the money must have been given through you, or with your knowledge?—In this particular instance.

395. When he started?—Yes.

396. You can say he did not get any money except from you?—If he had, I should have heard of it.

397. I think you have said, or indicated, that each member of the Committee was acting independently?—Yes; but for all that, if a man paid money, he would say, "I paid So-and-so so much," and the other members would know what had been paid.

398. Was there any credit at the bank that you could draw upon, or how was money raised? Did Captain Read furnish you with money, or authorize you to draw?—No; Captain Read did not pay anything until the election was over.

399. There was a bank account on account of the committee?—Not at that time.

400. "At that time"—was there any time?—No.

401. Did you send Pitt any money after he went away?—I did not send him any money, nor did any members of the committee do so, that I am aware of.